

**Colloquium February 27, 2026**  
**Brian Moseley (The State University of New York at Buffalo)**

**Title:** "'In a Tempo from Another Time": Habitual Memory and the Freedom of Constraint in Hans Abrahamsen's Recent Music"

**Abstract:**

Hans Abrahamsen's recent music is shaped by memory at every level. In works including *let me tell you* (2013), *Left, alone* (2015), the Horn Concerto (2019), and *Vers la Silence* (2021), Abrahamsen engages, I argue, with what Henri Bergson called 'habitual memory'—the past contracted not into recollected images but into embodied patterns and routines. Drawing on Bergson and Edward Casey's phenomenology of body memory, this paper argues that Abrahamsen's compositional habits constitute a form of habitual memory rooted primarily in his body. Born with cerebral palsy, Abrahamsen's bodily asymmetries have become structural procedures that permeate his recent music. In engaging memory in this way, Abrahamsen highlights a seemingly contradictory truth about mind and body alike: both can find creative freedom in their limitations. Tracing structural connections across a group of recent works, I show how they form a network of compositional memory—each remembering the others through shared devices that are transformed at every new appearance.

**Bio:** **Brian Moseley** is Associate Professor of Music Theory and Director of Undergraduate Studies at the University at Buffalo, where he has taught since 2014. His publications include a new theory of form for Webern's twelve-tone works (*Music Theory Spectrum*), studies of cycles and mystery (*Journal of Music Theory, Theory and Practice*), and recent essays on Thomas Adès (*Thomas Adès Studies*, winner of SMT's 2022 Outstanding Multi-Author Collection Award). He is completing a monograph titled *Webern Variations* and was a co-author of *Open Music Theory*.

At UB, he designed and teaches the new undergraduate music theory sequence and offers graduate seminars on post-tonal analysis, popular music, and contemporary composition. He has held leadership roles in SMT and MTSNYS, and has served as an editor for *Theory and Practice* and on the editorial board of *Music Theory Spectrum*. Beyond academia, he is an active gamelan musician, and a board member at Buffalo String Works and Nusantara Arts.